

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 EB-07 SCCT-01 DHA-02 AID-05

PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 OPR-02 USSS-00 A-01 OMB-01

SS-15 SY-05 /082 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9523

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU

DIA WASHDC

COMUSMACTHAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 16720

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, TH

SUBJ: STUDENT SYMPATHY RALLY OVER ARRESTS OF

NORTHERN FARMER ACTIVISTS

REF: A. BANGKOK 16518; B. BANGKOK 16510; BANGKOK 16721

1. THE STUDENT RALLY AT THAMMASAT IS BARELY LIMPING ALONG. AN EMBASSY POLITICAL ASSISTANT WHO VISITED THE SCENE OF THE DEMONSTRATION AUGUST 13 REPORTED THAT ONLY 300-400 STUDENTS WERE PRESENT. THE CHIANG MAI CONSUL REPORTED THAT NO MORE THAN 75 STUDENTS MAINTAINED THE VIGIL AT CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY AS OF NOON AUGUST 11. CHIANG MAI ALSO REPORTED THAT THE STUDENT COUNCIL OF CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY HAD VOTED TO URGE THE REOPENING OF CLASSES. THE COMPLETE REPORT FROM AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI IS CONTAINED IN REF C.

2. A THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR WHO ACTS AS THE LIAISON BETWEEN THE FACULTY AND THE STUDENTS TOLD AN EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICER ON AUGUST 11 THAT THE FACULTY

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HAD ADVISED THE STUDENTS TO COMPROMISE WITH THE GOVERN-

MENT ON THIS ISSUE BECAUSE THEY HAD LITTLE PUBLIC SUPPORT. HOWEVER, THE PRESENT GROUP OF STUDENT LEADERS, WHOM THE PROFESSOR CHARACTERIZED AS LESS SOPHISTICATED THAN THE PREVIOUS LEADERSHIP, SEE THIS ISSUE AS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO RALLY THE STUDENT GROUPS AND SEEM RELUCTANT TO COMPROMISE.

3. THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO CLEARLY OUTMANEUVER THE STUDENTS IN THE PRESS BY MAINTAINING A REASONABLE POSITION, WAGING A VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN TO EXPLAIN ITS POSITION AND ACTIONS TO THE PUBLIC, AND GENERATING ACTION TO INDICATE FORWARD MOVEMENT IN THE RTG INVESTIGATIONS OF THE MURDERS. WITH CONSIDERABLE JUSTIFICATION THE RTG BELIEVES IT HAS THE SITUATION UNDER CONTROL.

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